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THE 1937 AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN THE NORTH CENTRAL STATES

A radio talk by Claude Wickard, Director, North Central Region, AAA, broadcast Wednesday, December 23, 1936, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by NBC and 52 associated stations.

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Today I want to speak about the Triple A's agricultural conservation program for 1937 and to discuss developments of particular interest to farmers of the North Central Region.

I think you will be interested, first of all, in the progress we are making with this new program. You will also want to know about when you can obtain detailed information which will make it possible for you to consider provisions of the program as they apply to your own farm and your plans for next year.

Last week, members of the staff of the North Central Division met with State committees and State Extension Services and the representatives of these groups to discuss details of the program for next year. These meetings were held in each of the 10 States of the North Central Region.

It seemed to be the general consensus of opinion of those attending these meetings that the new program would be well received by farmers. In fact, many said they thought that the program should be more popular than any of the previous Triple A programs. They pointed out that this program follows closely the general outline recommended in community meetings attended by over 200,000 farmers of the North Central Region last October. This, they said, was especially true of the provision for meeting the situation brought about by the killing of clovers in the 1936 drought.

Plans are being made in all of the ten Corn-Belt States to hold county meetings or district meetings for groups of counties in the next week or two to give detailed information to county agents and county committeemen. In fact Illinois is holding district meetings this week. As soon as possible after the district or county meetings, the county agents and county committeemen will schedule community meetings to give all farmers in the community an opportunity to learn about the new program. Most of these community meetings will be held in January.

I am sure this early schedule is going to be a decided advantage to farmers in making their plans for next year. It was nearly planting time in many areas last year before Congress passed the Act which makes this program possible but this year we have an early start, and it will be possible for farmers to make plans which will conform to the objectives of the program well in advance of the growing season.

One of the first things farmers will want to consider in planning to take part in the 1937 program will be their needs for seed of soil conserving crops such as alfalfa, clovers and grasses. The supply of adapted varieties of these seeds is limited in many localities because of last year's drought,

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and for this reason they will want to make early arrangements for obtaining seed that they know is adapted to the area where they live.

Recent estimates by the crop reporting service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture show that the clover seed situation is better than preliminary estimates indicated. J. F. Cox, Triple A agronomist, makes this comment: "Until this report was completed, very little was known about reserves of seed held on farms and it appears that these reserves were larger than had been anticipated. Reserves larger than normal on farms might be expected, however, because of the attention which the agricultural conservation program directed toward the local saving of seed of soil conserving crops during last summer and fall."

In general, Mr. Cox says: "It is expected that there will be enough seed of soil conserving crops for usual plantings and for substantial increases in acreage, provided the available supply is properly used."

In the new program, provisions which have been made for substituting emergency forage crops on normal acreage of soil conserving crops destroyed by drought mean added improvement in the soil conserving crop seed situation. However, farmers should be sure to get adapted seed for the legumes and grasses they plant because a good stand of adapted varieties will be required in order to qualify for full payment.

In setting up the requirements for soil conserving crops for the 1937 program, careful consideration was given to the seed supply situation. We believe that by careful use of the available supply of adapted seeds and the substitution of emergency forage crops, farmers in the areas which were affected by drought will be able to provide ample forage for their livestock and at the same time make substantial progress in the conservation and improvement of soil resources.

The provisions in the 1937 program for the use of emergency forage and pasture crops are based upon the recommendations which farmers developed in their community meetings throughout the Region. These recommendations pointed out that one of the important problems to be considered in the areas seriously affected by the drought was how to provide ample supplise of pasture and forage for livestock until the farmers could reestablish their normal acreages of the more permanent grasses and legumes.

The provisions of the program allowing for the use of emergency pasture and forage crops will make it possible for farmers to use these crops to supply their immediate needs and to qualify for full payment by new seedings of soil conserving crops on the acres diverted from soil depleting uses.

State colleges and county agents will have the needed information on varieties of emergency forage crops and soil conserving crops adapted to the area in which you live. And in the community meetings in January, farmers can obtain detailed information on the provisions of the program regarding the use of these crops.

I hope that all farmers will plan to attend their community meetings. They are very important. At these meetings, the provisions of the program will be explained in detail, and elections will be held to choose the farmers who will have charge of administration of the program locally.

In that connection, I would like to say a word concerning the splendid job done by community and county committees in the 1936 program. Remember, these committeemen are all farmers chosen by their fellow farmers in meetings in the spring of 1936. Through their efforts, it has been possible to obtain rather detailed work sheets on over two million corn-belt farms preparatory to establishing bases for these farms. They have measured all the crop land on about three-fourths of these farms and are now rapidly completing the computations and the other work necessary to determine performance and payments under the 1936 agricultural conservation program. As fast as this work is completed, the applications for payments are presented to the cooperating farmers for their signatures and then are forwarded to State offices for examination and auditing before being submitted to the regional office of the Treasury for payment.

These applications are now coming into the State offices in volume and payments on about 80,000 applications, totaling about \$8,000,000 have already been sent out to farmers in the North Central Region for their part in the 1936 program. And remember, that this has all been accomplished in a period of less than eight months. Such an achievement is not only evidence that farmers can and will administer efficiently a national program for agriculture, but that the 1937 program, with its early start, will prove to be popular and effective.

I urge all farmers in the North Central States to watch for the announcement of community meetings on the new 1937 program.

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